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FARTHING WOOD FRIENDS

83

Based on the series shown on **B B C** TV.



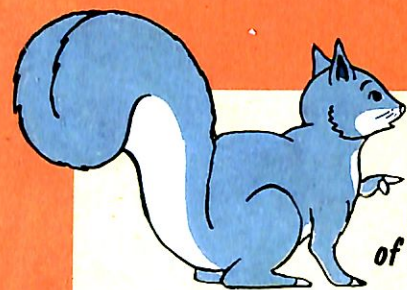
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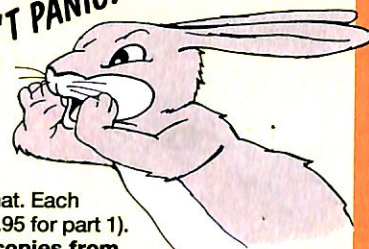
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CREDITS

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Key: AA = All About ...; CII = Colour it in; DN = Discovering Nature; FF = Fascinating Facts; HTD = How to Draw; PIO = Puzzle it out; SW = Secret World; TOFW = Tales of Farthing Wood.
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**FREE
STICKER
ALBUM
IN ISSUE 84**

DISCOVERING NATURE
Many trees get animals to transport their seeds for them, in their stomachs!

SECRET WORLD OF...
An ash tree
Animals live on, around and even in the wood of these pale grey trees.

PUZZLE IT OUT
Ants are busy creatures, and so will you be, if you do this week's puzzles.

Time and time again, the otters had interfered with the foxes' hunting techniques, so they decided to confront the otters about it. They came across Sleek Otter alone in the Wood, but instead of running away, she stood her ground ...

"Rather unfair odds, aren't they?" Sleek Otter asked.

"Then where are the others?" a young fox piped up.

"How should I know? In the Wood perhaps," she replied.

"In the Wood?" Stout Fox barked. "Nothing passed us as we came. How can that be?"

"Hardly likely they'd want to come face to face with a force of foxes," observed Sleek Otter, "and there are many ways to enter the Wood."

Lean Vixen was infuriated. Had the otters outmanoeuvred them again? Plundering the Wood while the foxes stood idle?

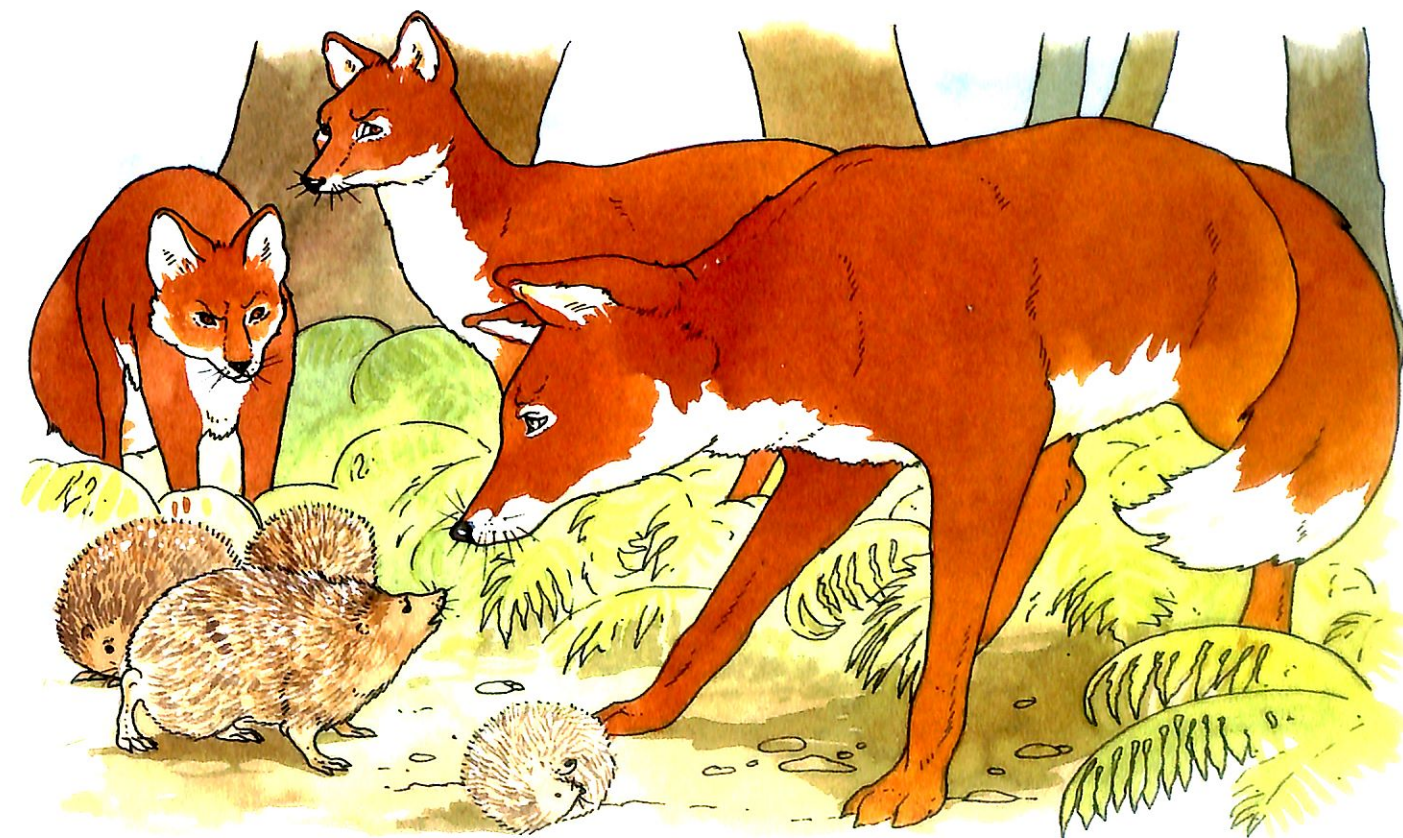
Chapter 5: One trick too many

"Back to the Wood!" Lean Vixen roared. "They've gone behind our backs!"

Sleek Otter giggled with delight. She knew quite well that not one otter, apart from herself, had left its holt yet.

Try as they might, the foxes couldn't find anything, although they did frighten some hedgehogs in their search. Stout Fox paused to grunt, "Have you seen any otters?"

"No, none. Why are you looking for them?" Sage Hedgehog said, unrolling himself when he saw there was no danger.



"The foxes and otters need to settle their differences and now there's only one way ..." said Stout Fox.

Sage Hedgehog refused to take sides. "The otters should stay, or it could mean disaster. Their presence here must be preserved. Don't let the humans in."

"Stuff and nonsense," Stout Fox declared. He knew all about Sage Hedgehog and his crackpot notions! "We'll use any means necessary to get rid of the otters."

Sleek Otter told the other otters of the foxes' plan. They decided it would be safer to avoid a confrontation. "The foxes will disband soon enough," Smooth Otter thought.

This was not how the foxes saw it. Stout Vixen, who'd stayed behind, greeted her mate's return, saying, "I see no signs of a scrap. Your coat's as clean as a cat's."

"There was no scrap," Stout Fox admitted, "because there were no otters."

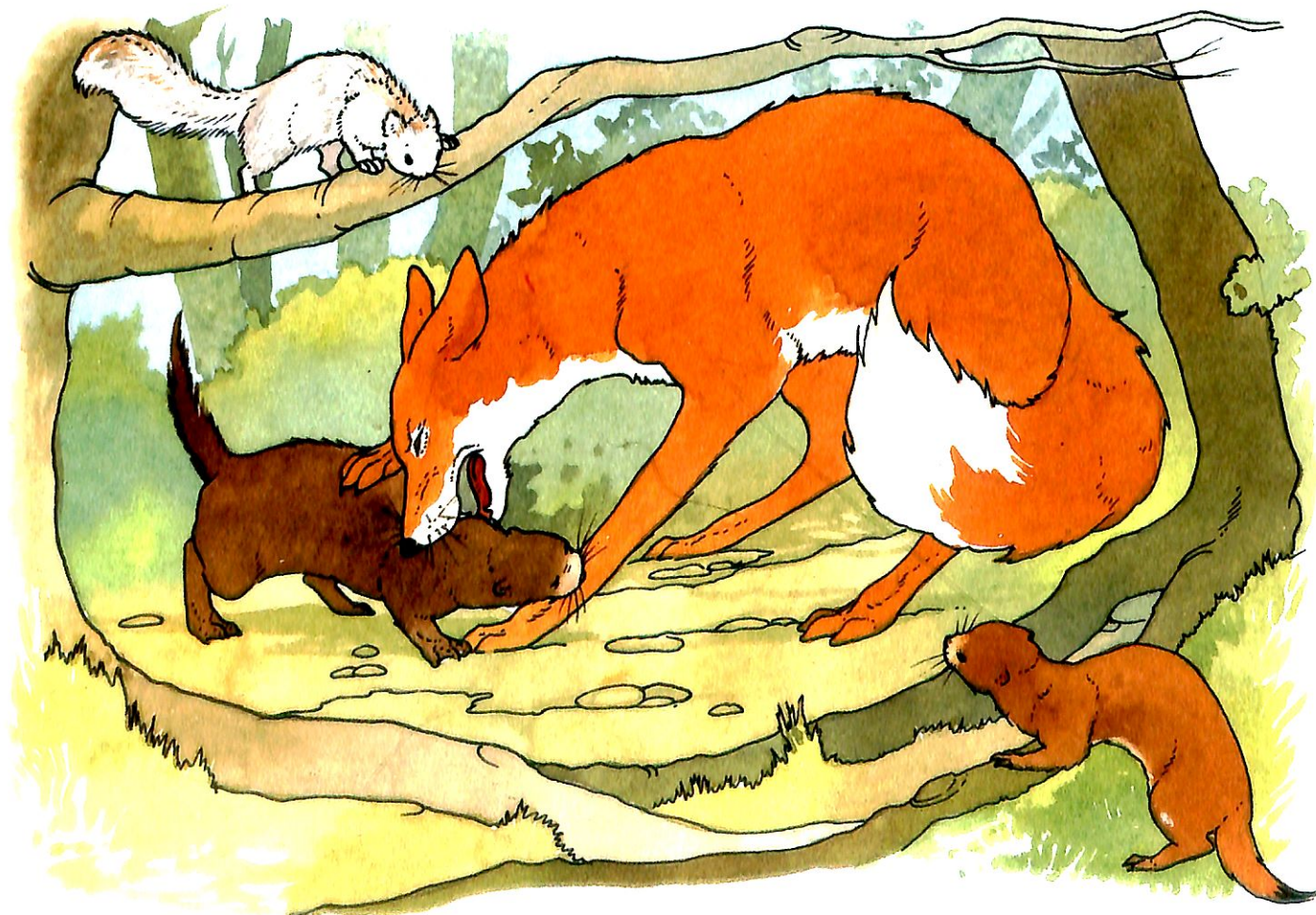
"Why don't you get rid of the otters altogether?" she asked.

"You mean – kill them?" Stout Fox muttered.

"Not *all* of them. When they see that their lives are in danger, they'll get the message." Stout Fox didn't like the idea. "Let's hope they won't provoke us any further," he said.

But, of course, it was not long before hunger forced the otters into the Wood once more. Smooth Otter, with his usual vanity, forgot what had happened to Sleek Otter. He tried to seize a young hare Lean Fox had his eye on. The hare spotted the otter's bungled attack and scooted away.

Lean Fox hurled himself at the otter and bowled him over. A vicious fight began. The noise attracted onlookers. Nervous Squirrel and Sly Stoat watched from a distance.



"It's l-l-level pegging," Nervous Squirrel squeaked, to anyone who cared to listen.

"Keep quiet," snapped Owl, "let them sort it out themselves."

Sly Stoat hid behind a tree trunk, peering round every now and then to watch the contest.

The otter kept out of the fox's reach, nipping him when he could. The bigger animal was panting and beginning to look confused.

Then Lean Vixen rushed up and it was two against one. The onlookers held their breath. The foxes lunged and Smooth Otter rolled over, bleeding from a dozen gashes.

"He's done for," Lean Vixen panted, "leave him now."

"D-d-death, death of an otter!" shrieked Nervous Squirrel.

The news spread through the Wood like wildfire. Four other otters were cornered in the Wood and pulled down. Another was caught and killed as she raced for safety in the stream. The rest of the otters abandoned their holts and ran for their lives. By dawn, not one single otter was to be found in Farthing Wood.

"The Wood's ours again," Stout Fox said. "But surely we could have achieved that without such violence?" "It had to be done," replied Lean Vixen.

A little later, two naturalists found the dead otters. They searched in vain for the other otters by the stream. As they walked, the woman pointed at the muddy ground. Fresh otter tracks, made by several animals, led away from the stream and away from Farthing Wood. What had happened to the other otters?

All About...

NIGHT OWLS



“Woo-woo-woo! Do you remember me from Issue 2? I’m Long-eared owl. Well, I thought you might like to know more about how we Long-eareds manage to do almost all our flying and hunting at night. We don’t send out ultrasonic sounds, like bats do, to find our way about in the dark. Instead, we rely on our superb eyesight and excellent sense of hearing. You probably haven’t seen many of my family about. That’s because we hide ourselves away during the day, and when we fly at night we hardly make any sound at all. The only time you might hear us is during the breeding season. Then our low, three-note calls echo eerily through the coniferous forests where most of us live.”

Some say we Long-eareds make a call just like the sound that humans make when they blow across the neck of an empty bottle. We start calling in late winter, during the breeding season, when we need to find a mate and claim our territories. We females make use of other creatures’ nests – usually that of a bird, like a magpie, or sometimes a squirrel’s drey. We lay about four or five eggs, in spring. When the chicks hatch they are covered in white down, but this is soon replaced by grey feathers. Brown quill feathers start to show through, making the chicks look quite spikey. Both parents feed them until they are nearly four weeks old. Then they leave the nest to hunt for themselves.



When I’m roosting in a tree during the day, I usually close my eyes and my face feathers droop. But if a strange noise disturbs me, I open my eyes wide, fan out my face feathers and stiffen up so that I look taller and thinner.

IT’S Amazing!

WHAT A MOB!

Night owls like the Tawny and the Long-eared, which roost during the day, are sometimes found by small birds such as thrushes, chaffinches, tits, robins and blackbirds. For some reason, these birds fly back and forwards, in front of the resting bird, making fake attacks and calling loudly. Other small birds arrive and join in with the mobbing. The owl doesn’t usually bother about the intruders: it either waits for them to move on or flies off in search of a quieter roosting spot.

Experts are not sure why the small birds mob the owls, which, if they felt like it, could easily snatch and tear apart any member of the mob. They think it could be a way of informing all the other birds nearby that there’s an owl in the area. Also, parent birds may be showing their young what one of their most dangerous enemies looks like.



I am 34cm long – that’s about the same size as a pigeon. I have light brown feathers streaked with pale and dark brown markings. My mottled colouring works well as a camouflage when I’m resting against a tree trunk at my daytime roost.

Like other owls, I have two discs of fine feathers around my eyes. Mine are fringed with white and I have more white feathers round my beak and between my eyes, which are a brilliant orange. One of my most noticeable features are my tufts, which stand up on the top of my head when I’m disturbed or angry. They may look like ears, but they’re not – my ears are at the side of my head, hidden under my thick feathers.



All About...

Hunting in the dark

“I’ve heard you humans find it hard to see anything on a dark night. We night owls are lucky, because our eyesight is at least two or three times more powerful than yours. But it is not good enough to allow us to rely only on our eyes to catch our food. In fact, we rely much more on our ears. They are protected by a flap of skin around the opening, which can be moved to catch the direction of sounds.

Both Tawny owl and myself

have one ear higher than the other. This helps us to pinpoint the exact position of the sound.

Having such big, heavily feathered wings, you would think small creatures would hear us swooping down on them. But our feathers have a velvety surface, which helps to deaden the noise of the air passing over them.

Also, the flight feathers of most birds are zipped up with tiny hooks, but ours are fringed like a comb, so that we can slice through the air silently.”

IT'S Amazing!

FAST FOOD

Night owls don't waste any time once they've identified the sound of a mouse running across the ground, or a vole chewing a stem of grass. Barn

owls take less than half a second to launch themselves from their perch in the direction of the noise at speeds of four metres per second.



A night owl you may have seen in your garden or park is Tawny owl. I'm afraid he's the reason that we mainly live in coniferous forests and small groups of trees. You see, he's larger and heavier than we are and since he eats the same small mammals and birds as we do, and roosts in trees, too, he doesn't like to share his habitat with us and often forces us out of deciduous woods. Luckily, he doesn't like coniferous forests or small, isolated copses, so we take refuge there.



Tawny owl has the same excellent sense of hearing and silent flight as us, but he hunts in a slightly different way. We fly about, listening and looking for a meal, but he watches from a perch. When he locates a possible meal, he drops down to scoop it up with his talons. Also, Tawnies nest in hollow trees, or in holes in disused buildings. Their young don't leave the nest until they're six or seven weeks old. They continue to be fed by their parents for another three months.

IT'S Amazing!

SNOW MEAL

The Great grey owl, which lives in North America, has such sensitive hearing that it can pick out the sound of a mouse running around under a thick layer of snow. It dives into the snow and picks out the mouse with its talons.





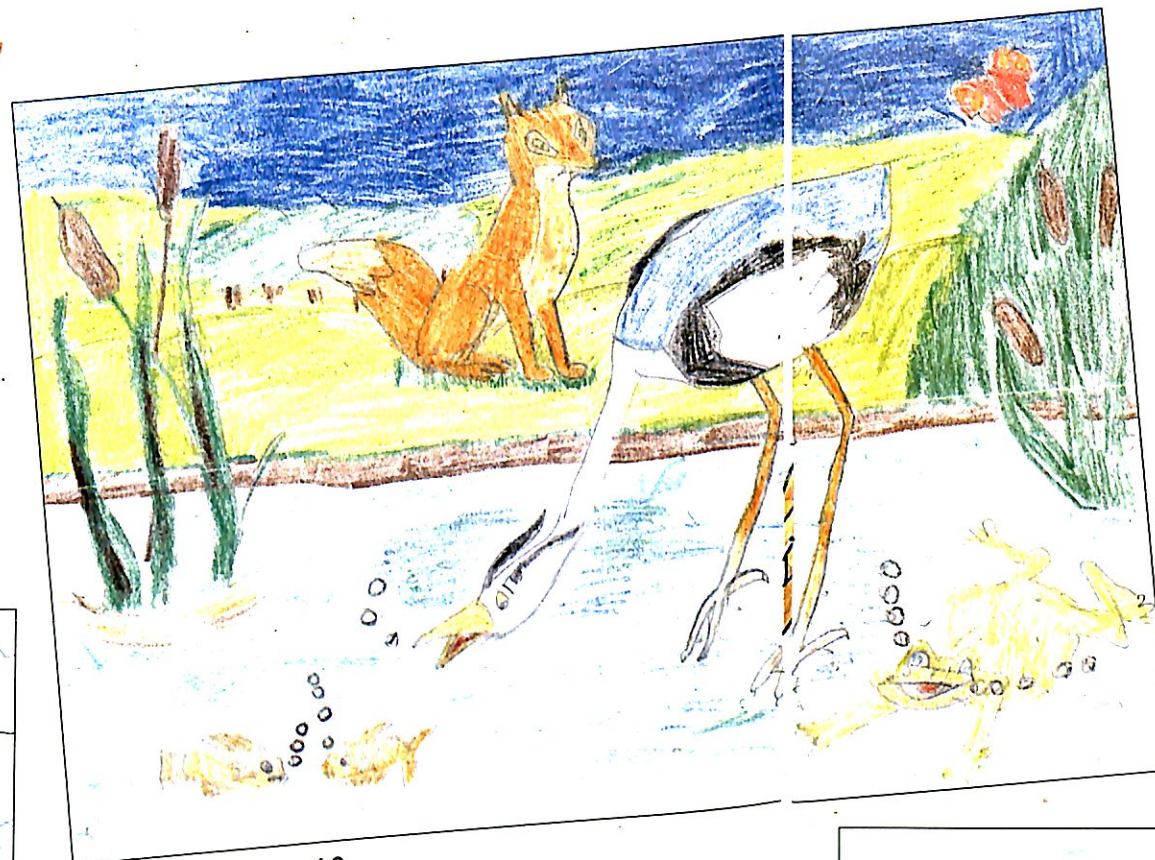
Dear Friends!

You'll need to use a bit of brain power this week to solve one reader's clever crossword.

Joan



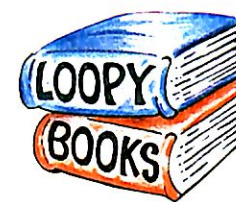
David Northmore, aged 6



Christopher Rae, aged 9

I stand by the door looking at the floor,
Wondering what the post will be,
At last I hear the van outside,
Will there be post for me?
Then a man comes to the door,
Shoves post through and leaves the house.
I cry out in delight, for there, just in sight,
Is my copy of Farthing Wood friends.

Samantha Tame, aged 7



See if you can work out these loopy book titles sent in by James Fennel, aged 10

Loud and Clear
by Mike Rofone

The White Rabbit
by Alison Wonderland

Who killed Cock Robin?
by Howard I. Know



Catherine and Elizabeth Slater, aged 10 and 7, sent us this lovely photo of their donkeys, and a poem to go with it.

We have a donkey,
Joyce is her name,
She has a long tail,
And a short fluffy mane,
She lives in a field,
With Bridget, her mum,
And we give her carrots,
To fill up her tum!



Helen Bolton, aged 11

Why did the tomato blush?

Because he saw the salad dressing.
Justine Parker

To pick my favourite animal,
Was very hard to do,
Because I love them all, you see,
I expect you love them too,
But Weasel came up number one,
Because she's cute and pretty,
I wish I was in White Deer Park,
It's better than the city.

Astrid Henderson, aged 9

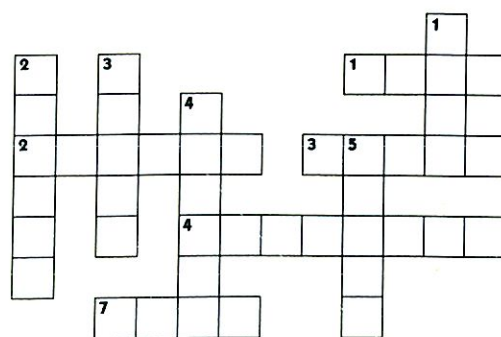


Christopher Cluxton, aged 7

THIS CROSSWORD IS BY SCOTT VIVIAN

ACROSS

- "Hello, matey!" is his call.
- The oldest in Farthing Wood.
- Small with a long nose.
- He bounds through the trees.
- A great digger.
- "Kee! Kee!" is her call.
- A squeak in the grass.
- Cunning and clever.
- They got left behind on the journey.
- Very prickly!

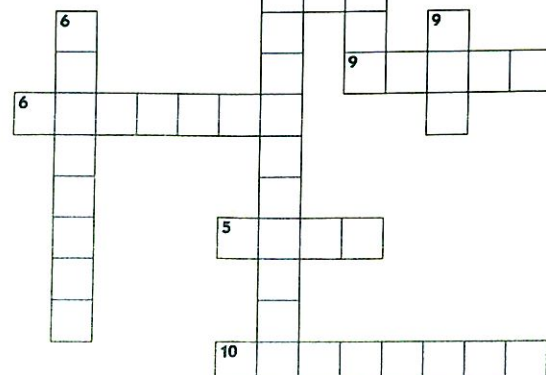


What do you say to a dolphin if you bump into one?

I'm very sorry, I didn't do it on porpoise!
Jenna Lucas, aged 10

DOWN

- He's quick on his feet.
- "Don't panic!" is her cry.
- Thiss creatures ssslithers and ssslides.
- She's a bad singer!
- He whistles as he flies.
- A vain bird.
- Fox's mate.
- He lives in a field.
- Silent in the night.



Tamsin Smith, aged 7

There was an old heron called Speedy,
Who was always going around being greedy,
She was usually grumpy,
And her flight was all bumpy
Until one day,
She went away,
And that was the end of poor Speedy.

David Speirs, aged 9

There is a £5 book token for anything used on this page.



CROSSWORD ANSWERS
ACROSS: 1 Toad, 2 Badger, 3 Shrew, 4 Squirrel, 5 Mole, 6 Kestrel, 7 Vole, 8 Fox, 9 Newts, 10 Hedgehog.
DOWN: 1 Hare, 2 Rabbit, 3 Adder, 4 Weasel, 5 Heron, 6 Pheasant, 7 Vixen, 8 Fieldmouse, 9 Owl.

Secret World of.. 

A COMPOST HEAP



“You may think a compost heap is nothing more than a place to dump garden rubbish. But inside, millions of microscopic bacteria are at work, turning grass cuttings, weeds and vegetable peelings into valuable garden fertilizer. As they work, they create heat, so the centre of the heap is very warm. This makes it a perfect spot to hibernate and you will find me here during the cold winter months. Many insects thrive in the warm layers of rotting plants. Mice and bees make their nests in the sides of the heap, birds hunt among the top layer of leaves, and I may be joined by a toad or a grass snake at hibernation time.”

Hedgehog's Challenge: how many centipedes can you spot rooting around in the heap?



FREE FARTHING WOOD POSTER

Remove carefully from your magazine.

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Mice dig cosy nests for themselves and their young at the edge of the compost heap. They come out at night to forage for food in the garden, sniffing out freshly sown seeds.

If you look carefully, you should be able to spot three centipedes looking for a tasty meal in the compost heap.



Brandling earthworms can be found in the damp, inner layers of the heap. They are important members of the compost heap community, because they help to break down the plant remains.



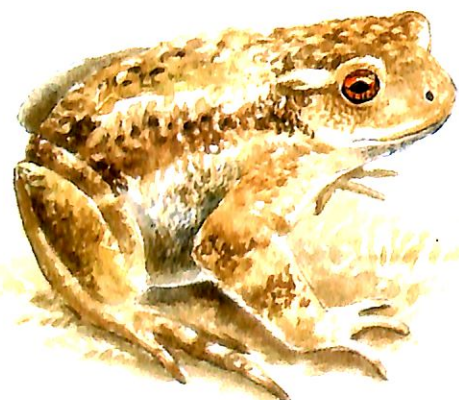
At about 3mm, the tiny **False scorpion** is a miniature version of a true scorpion, but without a tail or sting. It creeps through the compost, feeding on mites and springtails.



Centipedes thrive in the damp, shady compost heap where there are plenty of small creatures for them to eat. They have one pair of legs to each body segment, so they can have anything from 15 to 101 pairs of legs, depending on which kind of centipede they are.



Brittlehead toadstools have fragile stems and pale gills. They sprout from the edges of the compost heap, growing singly, or in small clusters.



The **Garlic glass snail** shelters within the heap. You will soon know if you've found one of these, as it smells strongly of garlic when it is handled.

The **Common toad** hides in the compost heap during the day, emerging at night to hunt for insects. During winter, the warm centre of the compost heap makes a perfect place to hibernate.

MAGNIFICENT MICE

We fieldmice are not the only mice around, you know, there are lots of different kinds (although, of course, we're the nicest). You'll find us and our relatives all over the place - up trees, down in burrows, even in your home.

Believe it or not...

MIGHTY MOUSE

The Wood mouse has large back feet that let him bound away at great speed with his front feet tucked up, just like a kangaroo.

SQUEAKY CLEAN FOOD

The House mouse's favourite foods are cereals and fats. It will quite happily tuck into a bar of soap or a bar of chocolate.

HEAD FOR HEIGHTS

Yellow-necked mice are great climbers - they have been found as high as 10m up a tree.

SMALL EYES, BIG STOMACH

The Harvest mouse is tiny - it weighs less than a 2p coin. However, it is very active, day and night, so it has to eat lots of food to keep up its strength.

MAKE A MOUSE

Give this mouse a realistic tail in thick grey yarn, or a psychedelic (brightly coloured) one.

You will need:

tracing paper, pencil, thin card, felt tip, scissors, needle and thread, pieces of felt (or other non-fraying material), PVA glue.

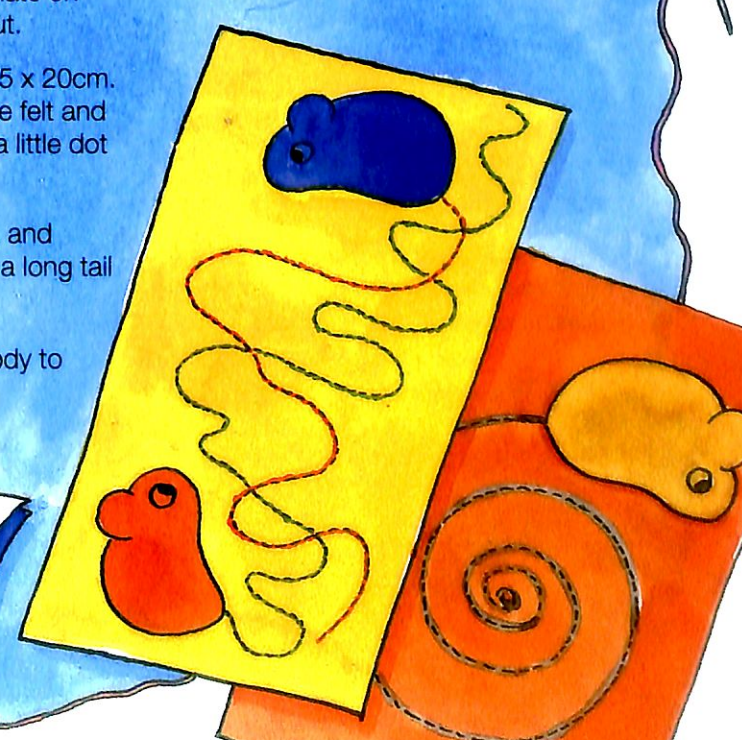
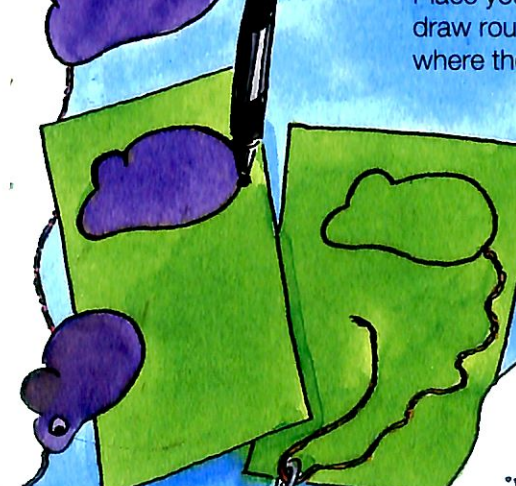
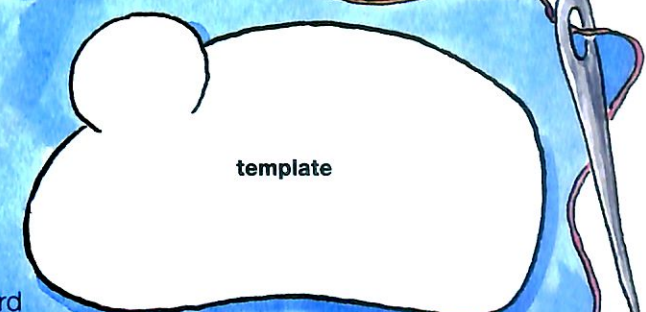
1 Trace the mouse template on to thin card and cut it out. Draw round this template on some felt and cut the body shape out.

2 Cut another piece of felt about 15 x 20cm. Place your mouse somewhere on the felt and draw round it in black felt tip. Make a little dot where the tail will meet its body.

3 Using running stitch, and starting at the dot, sew a long tail for your mouse.

4 Stick your mouse body to the felt with PVA glue.

What do you get if you cross a mouse with a bar of soap?
Bubble and squeak.



MOUSE CAKE

You'd better eat him before he runs off!

You will need:

sugar, butter or margarine, drinking chocolate powder, egg, digestive biscuits, liquorice string, Angelica, chopped nuts, glace cherry, two pink Smarties, plastic bag, rolling pin, wooden spoon, saucepan, chopping board.

1 Put a whole packet of digestive biscuits into a plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin.

2 Beat an egg with a wooden spoon and put it in a saucepan together with 75g sugar, one tablespoon drinking chocolate and 75g butter or margarine. Melt over a low heat and keep stirring all the time until the mixture comes to the boil.

3 Take the saucepan off the heat and stir in the crushed biscuits and 100g chopped nuts. Leave the mixture to cool down for 10 minutes – or until it's cool enough for you to handle.

4 Put the mixture on to a chopping board and mould it into a mouse-like shape. Decorate as shown, chill in the fridge for a few hours, then eat.

Squirrel says
Ask an adult to
help you use
the cooker.

liquorice string

pink Smarties

glace cherry

strips of Angelica

CATCH THE MOUSE

This game will test your reflexes.

You will need:

four corks, PVA glue, different coloured wools, plastic cup, coaster, felt tips, scraps of felt or paper, dice.

1 Decorate your corks with a mouse face. Glue on felt or paper ears. Use scraps of wool for short whiskers. Decorate the cup, too, but with a cat's face.

2 Tie a piece of coloured wool tightly round each cork, using a different colour for each mouse. Each tail should be about 15cm long.

3 One player holds the cat and dice; the others each hold a mouse by the tail. The mice bodies should sit on the coaster.

4 The cat throws the dice. If he throws a six or a two he slams the cup down over the mice. If he catches any before they are pulled out of the way, they've lost a life. If a mouse is pulled back before the dice has landed on the table, he loses a life, too. When a mouse has lost three lives, the cat can 'eat' him (i.e., the mouse is out of the game). Which of you is the champion mouser?

THISTLE NICE

Don't make too many of these, as animals need the seeds from thistle heads to eat in the winter.

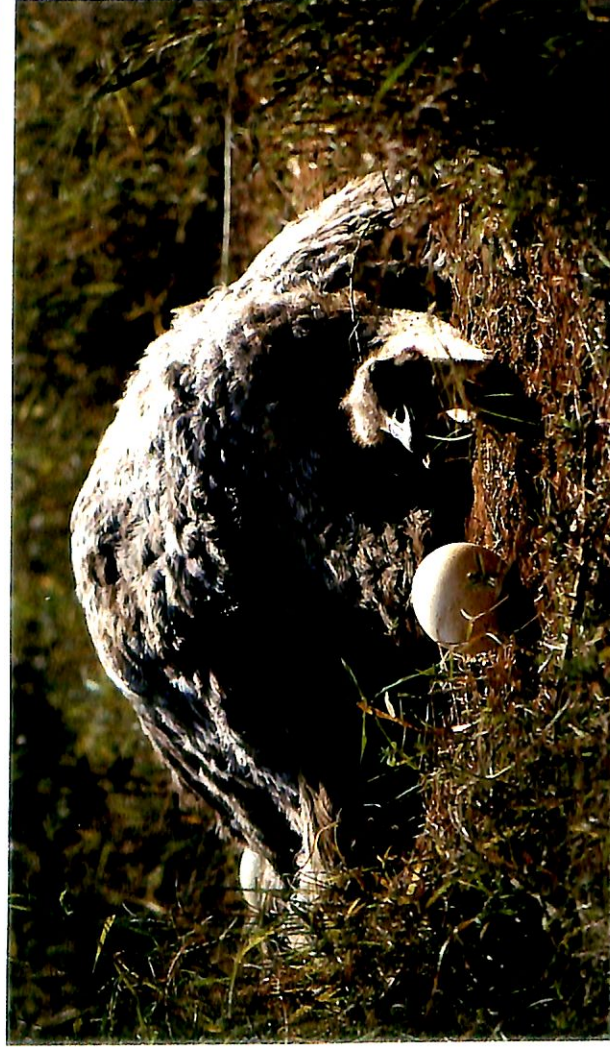
thistle body

poppy-seed eyes
and nose

cone-scale
feet

wool tail

WORLD NEWS...WORLD NEWS...WORLD NEWS...WORLD NEWS...



EGGSTRAORDINARY!

by Fox

Yesterday, explorers believed they had made an exciting discovery when they came across a huge egg, about the size of a melon. The egg was so tough that it didn't even crack when one of them stood on it! After further examination, they concluded that it must be a dinosaur egg, which was so old it had turned to stone. They were

just about to depart with the egg, when a rather annoyed ostrich came rushing out of the undergrowth. "She was hopping mad," said one witness. This was hardly surprising, since they were about to leave with her unhatched baby. Tempers soon cooled down when the explorers, who were rather embarrassed, apologized and returned the egg.

BEWARE OF THE CATFISH!

Eye in the Sky by Kestrel

An alert went out today, telling animals living by the River Danube to stay out of the way of the fish up, they found the the Wels catfish. It seems that several large specimens living in the river, some as big as 5m

long, have been caught by local fishermen. When they opened the fish up, they found the bodies of dogs and even the remains of small children inside. You have been warned!



TOAD'S

O P T E N	1. Laika (Samoyed husky)	USSR	1957
	2. Laska (mouse)	USA	1958
	3. Benijy (mouse)	USA	1958
	4. Able (Rhesus monkey)	USA	1959
	5. Baker (Squirrel monkey)	USA	1959
	6. Sam (Rhesus monkey)	USA	1959
	7. Belka (Samoyed husky)	USSR	1960
	8. Strelka (Samoyed husky)	USSR	1960
	9. Ptsyolka (Samoyed husky)	USSR	1960
	10. Muskka (Samoyed husky)	USSR	1960

These animals are real high flyers – they were the first animal astronauts. The dates on the right tell you when they travelled into space.

► Laika, being fitted up with her space outfit.



ADDER'S ADS

For hire: Private detective. Expert at air surveillance, tracking, swooping and spotting. Good rates. Any job considered. For more information contact Kestrel, Top Branch, Old Oak Tree.

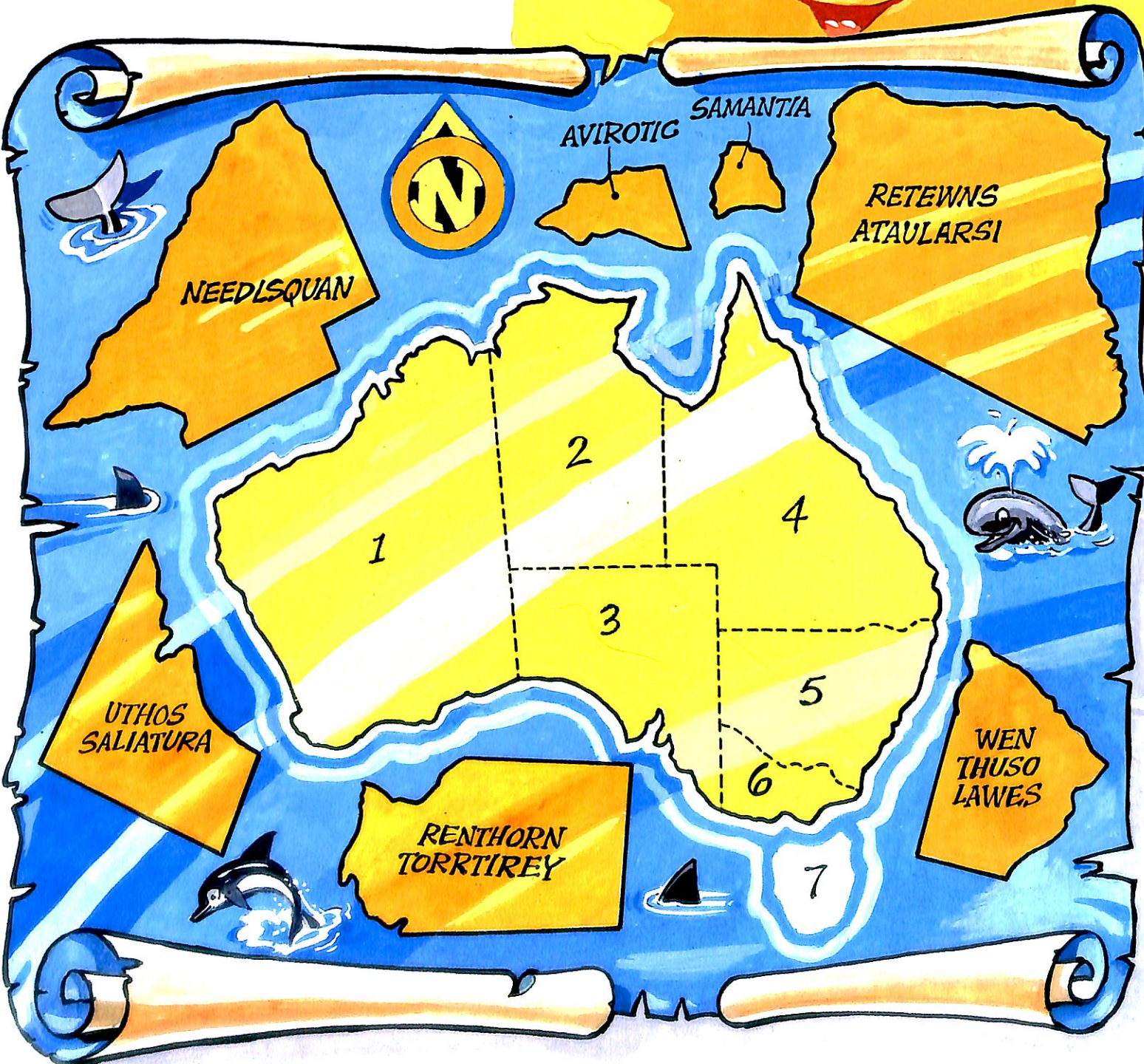
DOWN UNDER

One cold, wintry morning, Ranger had a letter from a distant cousin in Australia, Dingo. He read Dingo's letter out to Charmer. The letter described the hot, sunny November weather (Australia's seasons are the other way round from ours). Ranger and Charmer both agreed that Australia would be the perfect place to get away from the cold English winter. "The only trouble is," said Charmer, "don't they do

everything upside down over there? I think I'd get very confused."
"Don't be daft!" replied Ranger. "Do you think they walk around on their hands? Lots of things are different, but they're still the right way up!"

AUSTRALIAN STATES

Do you know the states of Australia? We've shown them here jumbled up; can you fit each state in the right place on the map?



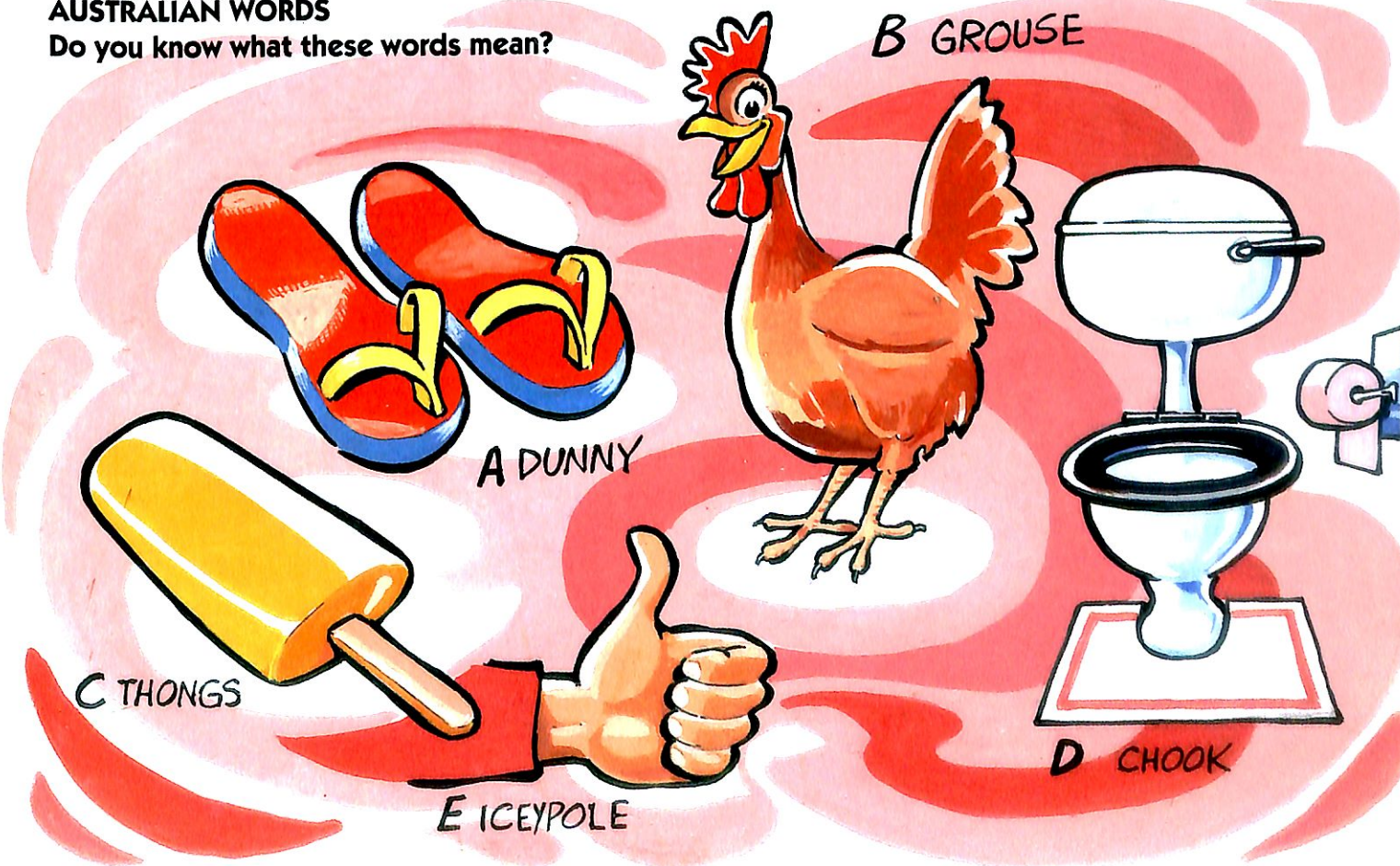
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the seven differences between the Australian and the European scene?



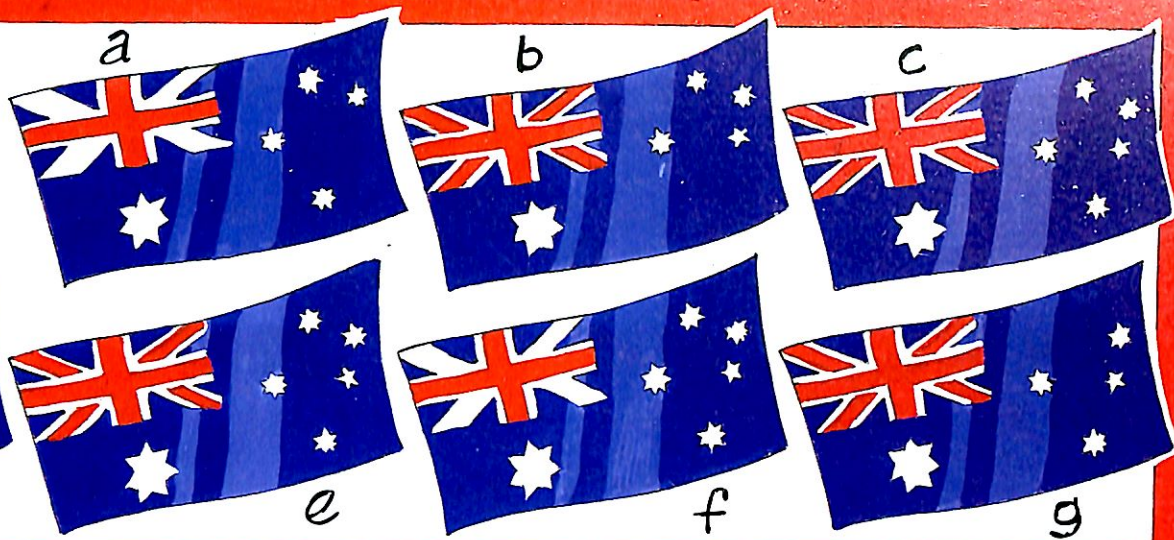
AUSTRALIAN WORDS

Do you know what these words mean?



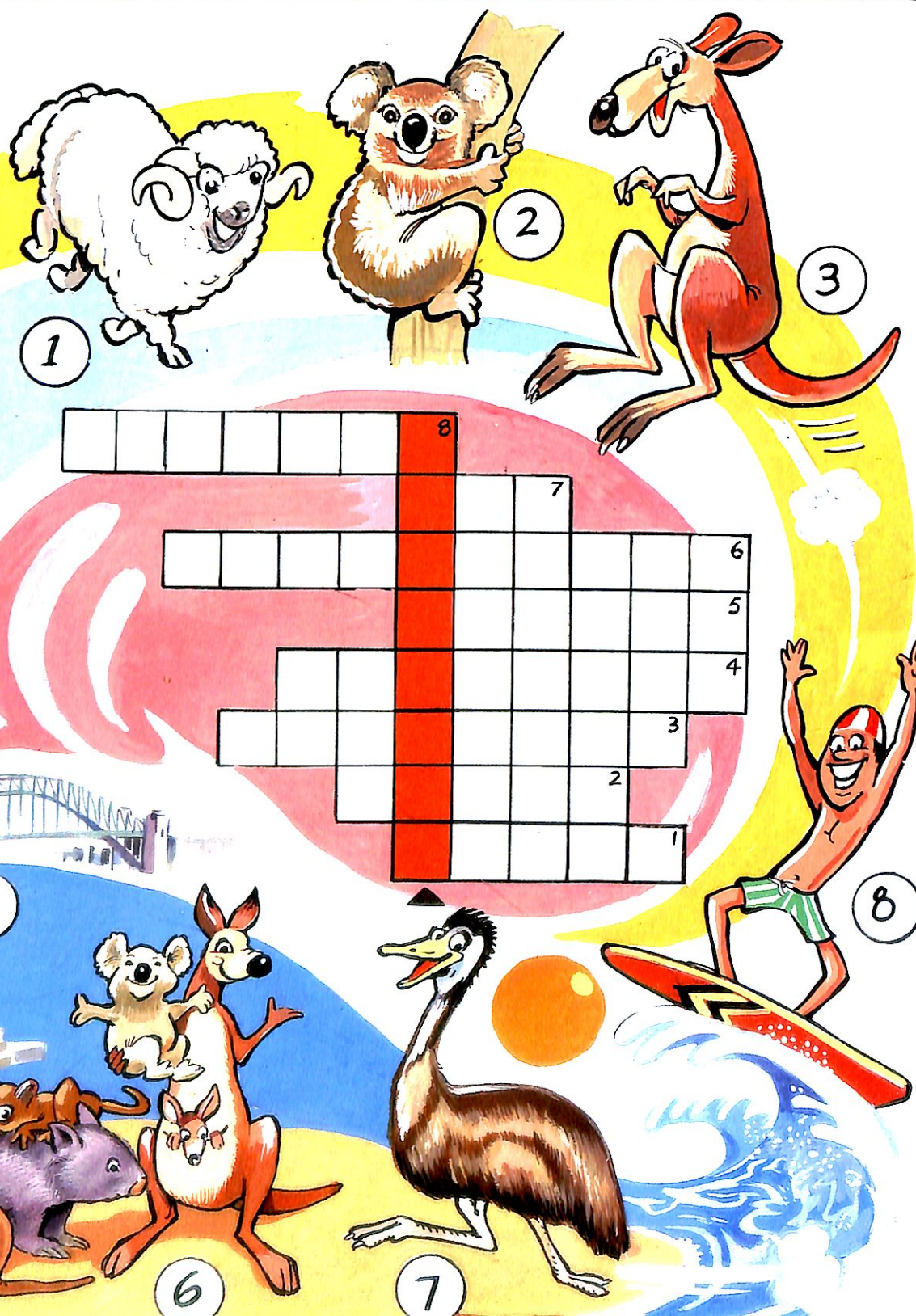
FIND THE FLAG

Only two of the flags below are the same – and they are real Australian flags. Can you find them?



CRISS-CROSS

In this upside-down, back-to-front criss-cross, work out the clues and write them in backwards (from right to left). The red column, read from bottom to top, will give you the name of a very strange Australian animal.



UPSIDE-DOWN PUDDING

You will need golden syrup, tin of sliced peaches drained, brown sugar, margarine, caster sugar, two lightly self-raising flour, whisked eggs, baking powder, ground cloves, 150ml milk, 18cm round cake tin, bowl, fork, wooden spoon, sieve, metal spoon, plate, cream.



1 Pre-heat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Grease an 18cm round cake tin and spread a tablespoonful of golden syrup over the bottom.

2 Arrange sliced peaches over the treacle and sprinkle 2tbsp brown sugar over them.



3 Put 110g soft margarine in a bowl with 110g caster sugar. Cream together with a fork until fluffy.

4 Use a wooden spoon to beat the eggs thoroughly into the butter and sugar mixture.

5 Sieve 175g flour, 1tsp baking powder and ½tsp ground cloves into the bowl. Stir them in lightly with a metal spoon. Add enough milk so that you have a soft 'dropping' consistency. That means that if you tilt the spoon the mixture drops off slowly, but doesn't pour off.

6 Spoon this mixture over the peaches and bake in the middle of the oven for 1hr 10mins.



7 Turn out on to a large plate and serve hot, with cream.

ANSWERS

AUSTRALIAN STATES: 1 Western Australia, 2 Northern Territory, 3 South Australia, 4 Queensland, 5 New South Wales, 6 Victoria, 7 Tasmania.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: Look at the koala, clock, hat, stars, flowers, water, can and light.

AUSTRALIAN WORDS: A: Dunny/toilet, B: Grouse/good (thumbs up), C: Thongs/flip-flops, D: Chook/chicken, E: Icepole/lolly.

FIND THE FLAG: The Australian flags are c and e.

CRISS-CROSS: 1 Sheep, 2 Koala, 3 Kangaroo, 4 Cockatoo, 5 Sydney, 6 Marsupials, 7 Emu, 8 Surfing – PLATYPUS

Colour it in 

VIXENS AT WAR

